

An aerial, grayscale illustration of a complex highway interchange with multiple lanes, overpasses, and several cars driving on the roads. The image serves as a background for the document cover.

# *MDT's Guide to Public Involvement*

*Published by the Montana Department of  
Transportation Planning Division*



# Montana Department of Transportation Planning Division

2701 Prospect Ave.  
P.O. Box 201001  
Helena, MT 59620



<b>Toll Free:</b>	1-800-714-7296(Montana Only)
<b>Fax:</b>	(406) 444-7671
<b>Voice:</b>	(406) 444-3423
<b>Road Conditions:</b>	1-800-226-7623
<b>TDD:</b>	(406) 444-7696
<b>E-Mail:</b>	ddreher@state.mt.us
<b>Transportation Commission:</b>	(406) 444-7200
<b>Internet Home Page Address:</b>	<a href="http://www.mdt.state.mt.us">http://www.mdt.state.mt.us</a>



# *Summary of Project Specific*

Each transportation proposal requires a public involvement plan tailored to the specifics of the project. The level of public involvement can vary significantly from project to project.

Basically, there are four levels of suggested public involvement. Level A is intended for the simplest project and Level D envisions complex projects where a high degree of public involvement is essential to successfully complete the project. Level B & C are progressively more complex and the public involvement plan is similarly complex. Actual plans may include a combination of items from all four levels and are flexible in that items are added if needed to keep the public informed and involved.

## ***Examples Of Public Involvement Level A & D Are Presented Understanding That Level B & C Projects Would Fall In Between Them***

### **Level A**

1. News release explaining the project.

### **Level D**

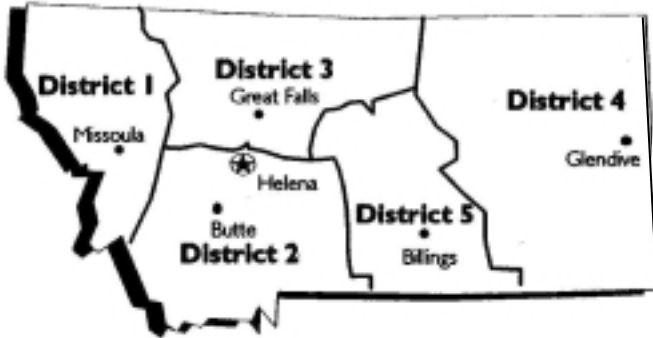
1. Notice of Intent and News Release. Schedule contacts with a newspaper or papers serving the area to develop a story and graphics that explain and illustrate the proposal. Radio and TV contacts. Federal Register Notice of Intent (projects requiring EIS.)

## **Level D (cont'd.)**

2. Establish "advisory committee" to guide the study.
3. Establish inter-disciplinary (ID) team.
4. Personal contacts with adjacent landowners for right-of-entry and preliminary right-of-way report.
5. Personal contacts with local government officials, interest groups and civic organizations.
6. Scoping meetings:
  - Public meeting to determine the scope of the issues.
  - Public meeting to identify possible alternatives.
  - Public meetings on findings and significant issues.
7. Personal contacts with landowners, government officials, interest groups during Environmental Assessment & Environmental Impact Statement preparation.
8. Public Hearing.
9. News account of the public hearing.
10. Personal contacts with landowners, government officials interest groups explaining decision, alternative.
11. News release announcing the decision, selected alternative. Or contact with a newspaper or papers serving the area to develop another story and graphics that explain and illustrate the decision. Radio and TV contacts (or news release, depending on the level of interest).
12. Personal contacts with adjacent landowners explaining final design(construction limits, approaches, etc.)
13. Construction notification and information during construction.

# Project Specific

While District Administrators are not always the lead office, they are always familiar with the projects in their area. If they can't help you themselves, they will direct you to the appropriate people.



## **District 1 Administrator - Missoula** **Loran Frazier**

P.O. Box 7039  
Missoula, MT 59807-7039  
(406)523-5800  
E-Mail: [lfrazier@state.mt.us](mailto:lfrazier@state.mt.us)



## **District 2 Administrator - Butte** **Jason Giard**

P.O. Box 3068  
Butte, MT 59702-3068  
(406)494-3224  
E-Mail: [jgiard@state.mt.us](mailto:jgiard@state.mt.us)

# *Contacts*

## **District 3 Administrator - Great Falls**

### **Michael (Mick) Johnson**

P.O. Box 1359

Great Falls, MT 59403-1359

(406)727-4350

E-Mail: mijohnson@mt.state.us

## **District 4 Administrator - Glendive**

### **Bill McChesney**

P.O. Box 890

Glendive, MT 59330-0890

(406)365-5296

E-Mail: bmcchesney@mt.state.us

## **District 5 Administrator - Billings**

### **Bruce Barrett**

P.O. Box 20437

Billings, MT 59104-0437

1-888-863-8465 or (406)252-4138

E-Mail: bbarrett@state.mt.us

## **All Other Inquiries**

### **Dave Dreher**

P.O. Box 201001

Helena, MT 59620

1-800-714-7296 or (406)444-6245

E-Mail: ddreher@mt.state.us

# MDT's Transportation Planning Mission

The overall goal of the Transportation Planning Division's public involvement is to...

***Provide multiple ways for interested citizens and stakeholders to obtain information and provide input into the transportation planning and decision-making process through a flexible, responsive and cost-effective public involvement process.***



# Target Audience



The target audience for the Transportation Planning Division's public involvement includes the following groups:

- ◆ General Public
- ◆ Transportation Professionals  
(Planners, engineers, transit providers, etc.)
- ◆ Advocacy Groups  
(Environmental, agricultural, highway user organizations, etc.)
- ◆ Tribal Governments
- ◆ Political Leaders  
(Legislators, mayors, city & county commissioners, etc.)



# *Ongoing Public Involvement*

The target audience is directly involved in the Division's public involvement process through the following ongoing strategies:

## *Quarterly Newsletter*

The Transportation Planning Division's quarterly newsletter, Newsline, is mailed to over 5,000 citizens, stakeholder organizations, and elected and appointed officials.

The Transportation Planning Division uses Newsline to provide information and gather input on planning activities and topics, and is constantly working to expand the mailing list.

The design and content of Newsline is appropriate for the general public, and articles and graphics are presented in a nontechnical user-friendly manner.

## *Speaker's Bureau*

The Transportation Planning Speaker's Bureau provides citizens with an easy way to request speakers on specific transportation planning-related topics.

The Bureau is periodically highlighted in Newsline. Interested individuals or groups can call the Division's toll-free information line and arrange for appropriate staff members to talk to them about their specific issue.

# *Ongoing Public Involvement*

## *Toll-free Information and Comment Line*

**1-800-714-7296 (Montana only)**

The Division's toll-free information and comment line provides a quick and inexpensive way to request information, provide comments, ask to receive *Newsline*, and discuss transportation issues with Division staff. The toll-free line is also used extensively during the annual development of the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

## *Issue or Study-Specific Focus or Advisory Groups*

The Division uses study or project-specific advisory groups during the development of special studies or projects to provide valuable input from individuals and groups knowledgeable about the specific issues.



# *Ongoing Public Involvement...*

## *Press Releases and/or Advertisements Announcing Availability of Special Planning Products*

The Division occasionally publishes special reports addressing specific transportation issues. In some cases, these reports are of interest to various members of the target audience. The Division uses Newslines, press releases, the MDT Internet Home Page, or advertisements, as appropriate, to notify the general public of the availability and content of these reports.

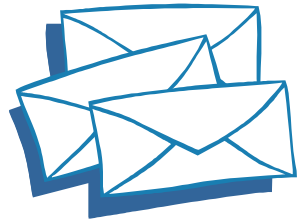
## *Input Received During Development of the STIP*

The Multimodal Programming Bureau conducts an extensive public involvement process in support of the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The STIP is the three-year list of planned transportation projects. Although the input received during this process is usually project-specific, some commenters provide input on broader, planning-related issues. These comments are shared with appropriate offices within the Division and Department to ensure that all public input is monitored, considered, and receives a response.

# *Ongoing Public Involvement..*

## *Special Mailings to Groups and Individuals*

Occasionally, state and national transportation issues require the development of “white papers”. The Division mails these reports to groups or individuals interested in the issue or issues addressed. These reports are also noted in Newslines and on MDT’s Internet Home Page.



## *Transportation Planning Conference*

As the division responsible for statewide transportation planning, the Transportation Planning Division strives to stay aware of local transportation issues and concerns. In addition to the Division’s ongoing communications, this goal is addressed in Division-sponsored conferences that bring together State, local and tribal government planners to discuss planning issues and provide technical assistance.



# *Ongoing Public Involvement..*

## *Internet Home Page*

MDT has developed an extensive Internet Home Page. The Transportation Planning Division uses this “hightech” communication tool to provide information and solicit comments. Various types of information available are: an overview of the current Newsline, various publications available upon request from the Division, rail and transit maps, as well as information from each MDT Division.

**Internet Home Page Address:**  
**<http://www.mdt.mt.us>**



# Ongoing Public Involvement...

## Staff Contacts

Routine staff contacts with the public are an important and often overlooked element of effective public involvement processes. All Division (and MDT) staff members are encouraged to treat all contacts as customers. This customer service orientation stresses direct interaction between our customers and the staff people responsible for managing the Division's programs. The following chart provides the names of key Division staff people who can be contacted by address or by calling 1-800-714-7296.

### ***MDT Transportation Planning Division:***

#### **Bureau Chiefs:**

Bill Cloud - Data & Statistics  
Sandy Straehl - Program & Policy Analysis  
John Craig - Division Support  
Dick Turner - Multimodal Planning  
Thomas Martin - CTEP

#### **Supervisors:**

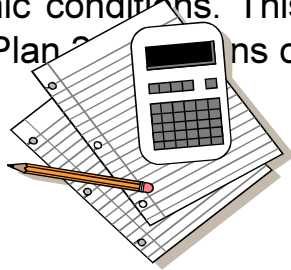
Ross Tervo - Intelligent Transportation System  
Dan Bisom - Traffic Data Collection  
Becky Duke - Systems and Mapping  
Lynn Zanto - Urban  
Janis Winston - Transit  
Dave Jensen - Fiscal Programming  
Jeff Ebert - Project Analysis

# *Biennial TranPlan 21 Evaluation*

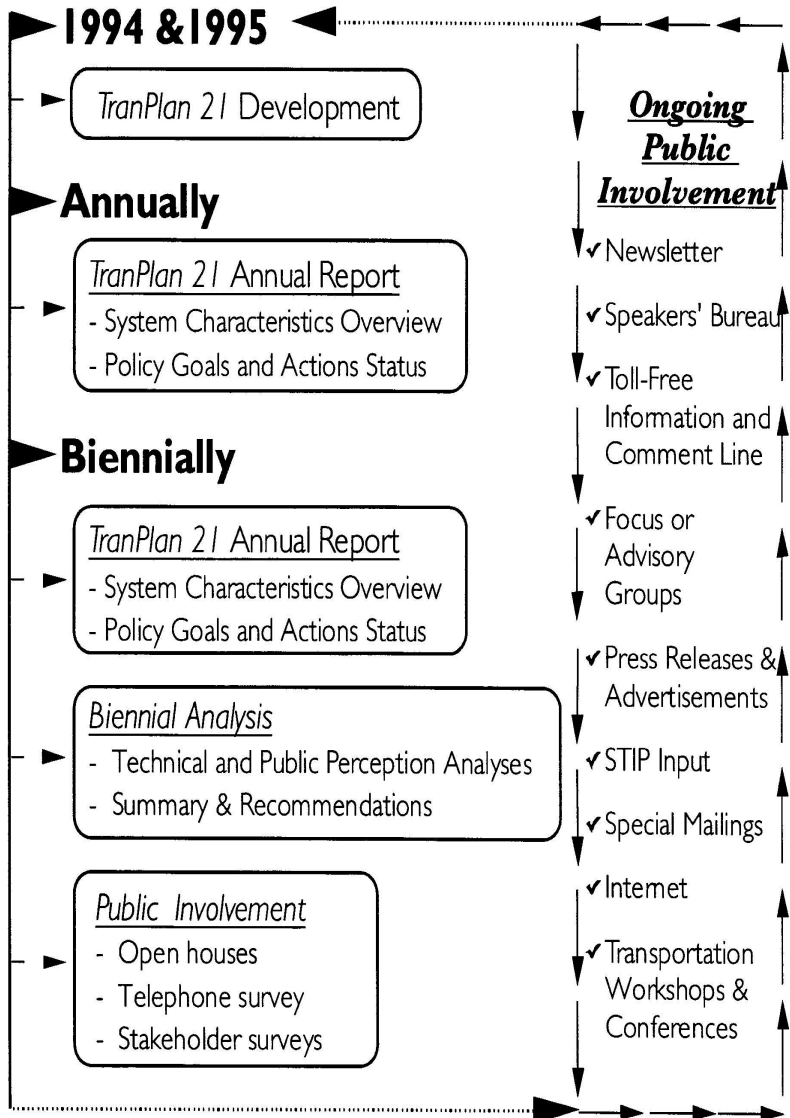
In addition to the ongoing public involvement methods described on Pages 8-13, the Division undertakes additional public involvement activities as part of the biennial TranPlan 21 evaluation process. In general, these activities are modeled on similar activities of the public involvement process for the initial development of TranPlan 21. These activities fall into three categories.

1. Regional Open Houses
2. Telephone Survey
3. Stakeholder Surveys

The results of these activities are summarized in a report along with an analysis of transportation system and socioeconomic conditions. This report is used to determine if TranPlan 21 needs or updates are necessary.



# TranPlan 2I Implementation and Evaluation Process





## *Division Evaluation*

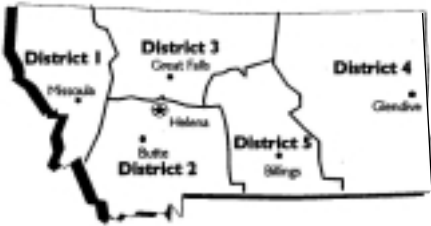
Division staff monitors the effectiveness of its public involvement process by reviewing survey response rates, meeting attendance numbers, and evaluation forms. Because it's difficult to expect any public involvement process to reach all individuals and groups on all issues, the Division constantly works to improve and expand its public involvement process based on the results of this continuing evaluation.

# Additional Department Contacts:

Director  
 Marv Dye 444-6201  
 Chief of Staff  
 Jim Currie 444-7222  
 Public Information  
 444-7205  
 Human Resources  
 Russ McDonald 444-6040  
 Legal Services  
 Tim Reardon 444-6090  
 Environmental Services  
 Joel Marshik 444-7632  
 Tribal & Inter-Governmental Relations  
 Joel Marshik 444-7632

**Divisions:**  
 Administration  
 Bill Salisbury 444-6023  
 Aeronautics / Aeronautics Board  
 Mike Ferguson 444-2506  
 Engineering  
 Gary Gilmore 444-6206  
 Maintenance  
 John Blacker 444-6158  
 Motor Carrier Services  
 Drew Livesay 444-6140  
 Transportation Planning  
 Patricia Saindon 444-3143

## Transportation Commissioners and Related Montana County License Plate Prefixes



### District 1 Dan Larson 293-3304

4. Missoula  
 7. Flathead  
 13. Ravalli  
 15. Lake  
 28. Powell  
 35. Sanders  
 46. Granite  
 54. Mineral  
 56. Lincoln

### District 2 Patricia Abelin 587-0134

1. Butte/Silver Bow  
 6. Gallatin  
 18. Beaverhead  
 25. Madison  
 30. Anaconda-  
 Deer Lodge  
 47. Meagher  
 43. Broadwater  
 49. Park  
 51. Jefferson

### District 3 Bob McKenna 443-2591

2. Cascade  
 5. Lewis & Clark  
 12. Hill  
 19. Chouteau  
 21. Toole  
 24. Blaine  
 26. Pondera  
 31. Teton  
 38. Glacier  
 48. Liberty

### District 4 Nancy Espie 483-5484

9. Powder River  
 11. Phillips  
 14. Custer  
 16. Dawson  
 17. Roosevelt  
 20. Valley  
 27. Richland  
 29. Rosebud  
 34. Sheridan  
 37. Daniels  
 39. Fallon  
 41. McCone  
 42. Carter  
 45. Prairie  
 50. Garfield  
 52. Wibaux

### District 5 Thorm Forseth 259-3147

3. Yellowstone  
 8. Fergus  
 10. Carbon  
 22. Big Horn  
 23. Musselshell  
 32. Stillwater  
 33. Treasure  
 36. Judith Basin  
 40. Sweet Grass  
 44. Wheatland  
 53. Golden Valley  
 55. Petroleum



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